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COURBET

AND POPULAR IMAGERY

An Essay on Realism and Naïveté

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I

The caricatures of Courbet's paintings reduce his work to the level of popular and unskilled art; they show his figures as stiff, schematic little *bonshommes* (Fig. 1a).¹ A child at a gingerbread stall, in a caricature of 1853,² cries to his mother: "Oh! maman, vois donc ces beaux courbets! Achète m'en! quatre pour un sou!" And the critics, from the forgotten reviewers to Théophile Gautier,³ deride the primitive character of his art, the likeness to tobaccoists' signs and the *images d'Épinal*; it is a "*peinture d'Auvergnat*."⁴

These criticisms are not simply a pattern of abuse applied to all innovating art. The Romantics before him and the Impressionists afterwards were attacked in another way. Their works were considered mad or chaotic, like certain paintings of our own time. They might also be criticized as childishly incompetent and ugly, but it is hard to imagine Delacroix's *Sardanapale* or Monet's street scenes caricatured as rigid in form. In the nineteenth century, the charge of childishness was sometimes brought against classicistic or too synthetically composed forms.⁵ Even Courbet, who had passed through the school of romantic art, spoke contemptuously of the figures of David as "bonhommes pour amuser les enfants au même titre que l'imagerie d'Épinal;"⁶ and the same criticism is made in substance by Thackeray in his *Paris Sketch Book*,⁷ when he draws the *Horatii* as rigid semaphores in a row. Relative to Courbet's atmospheric, tonal painting, the classical school is archaically stiff; but beside the mobility and pit-

torque of romantic art, Courbet himself seems inert. In an essay on Courbet in 1856, Silvestre addresses the same reproach of immobility and lack of lively gestures to both Ingres and Courbet.⁸ Hence, if the abusive criticism may be applied indiscriminately, it has sometimes a basis in positive qualities of the works attacked.⁹

The charge of primitiveness was provoked also by Courbet's themes. The *Wrestlers*, which recalls in its elaborate study of the muscles the effort of a Pollaiuolo, was ironically recommended as a background for the strong man in the circus.¹⁰ Among the masculine nudes of contemporary painting, with their heroic, mythical or tragic meanings, the wrestling figures seemed a profane intrusion of the vulgar taste of the fairs.

Yet in characterizing his work as naïve, the unfriendly critics of Courbet agreed finally with his supporters. His chief defender, Champfleury, found in this naïveté one of the great qualities of Courbet's painting. He likened the *Enterrement* in its simplicity and force to the art of the folk *imagier*.¹¹

De loin, en entrant, l'Enterrement apparaît comme encadré par une porte; chacun est surpris par cette peinture simple, comme à la vue de ces naïves images sur bois, taillées par un couteau maladroit, en tête des assassins imprimés rue Gît-le-Coeur. L'effet est le même, parce que l'exécution est aussi simple. L'art savant trouve le même *accent* que l'art naïf.¹² (Fig. 1b)

What Champfleury had in mind here was that "synthetic and simplifying vision" which Baudelaire was to attribute later to Corot and Guys, and which he found also in Egyptian, Ninivite and Mexican art.¹³ Courbet was obviously not trying to revive the conventions of popular imagery, as archaistic painters of the nineteenth century imitated those of antiquity or the middle ages. Yet in his composition, he shows unmistakable tendencies toward a more primitive form. With all their colorism and richness of pigment, with their advanced use of tones to build up the whole, his arrangements are

often simplified, with a clarity of grouping determined by the interest in the single objects. This is most evident when we set his larger canvases beside the baroque compositions of Delacroix, who was distressed by the mere juxtaposition of parts in Courbet's paintings, their lack of gestures and psychological interplay.¹⁴ Delacroix's figures are learnedly "organized" and resemble the machines of the *Salons*; while Courbet's large paintings, according to Champfleury, "have the supreme quality of a horror of composition."¹⁵ His drawing is often irregular in an earnest, empirical manner, unrefined by the *poncifs* and idealizations of a grand style, as if he were tracing a complicated shape for the first time; the creases and broken outlines of the clothes of the *Casseurs de Pierres* are examples of this mode of observation which was ridiculed as vulgar in 1850.

That Courbet was familiar with the traditional methods, we can judge from his early paintings; if he gave them up, it was because they were inadequate for his vision and subject matter. He was conscious of the larger pattern and the single shapes as qualities of the objects resented; and in rendering scenes of popular life, he sometimes accentuated the rusticity of the figures by his very mode of drawing and grouping them. The drawing of the *Aumône du Mendiant*¹⁶ (Fig. 1c) seems naïve, even artless, and suggests certain figures of Van Gogh. In the *Enterrement* the stark contrast of red and black on the grey background and the clarity of the aligned, recurrent faces with their strong red tones, were conscious departures; before, he had painted similar heads in outdoor scenes with deep shadows and more subdued colors. That is why the portraits in the *Burial* gave the impression of a primitive, rustic taste. The distant heads are almost as bright as the nearer ones. They pleased the people in Orans who had sat for them, but the Parisian critics, schooled in the contrasted, shadowy, atmospheric painting of the romantics, found the portraits not only ugly as human types, but plebeian in execution. The desire for shadowless, unatmospheric portraits, like the frontality, was a typical petit-bourgeois taste, which had been ridiculed by Monnier in his play *Le Peintre et les Bourgeois*.¹⁷ The naïve spectator from the lower middle class responded to shadows on a portrait face no differ-

ently from the Chinese empress, who assured the Italian painter that the two sides of her face were of the same color.

In its content especially, the *Enterrement* resembles works of popular imagery. The first, or at least an early, stage, preserved in a sketch on paper in the museum of Besançon (Fig. 2a),¹⁸ shows a procession to the cemetery moving from right to left. The grave-digger is at the extreme left, the rectangle in the center is a grave-stone, the landscape is less developed. This drawing is like a popular wood-cut of Courbet's youth, *Souvenir Mortuaire*, produced about 1830 in Montbéliard, a few miles from Ornans, which the country people attached to the wall after a funeral and inscribed with the name of the deceased (Fig. 2b).¹⁹ It shows also the procession to the left, the grave-digger at one end, grave-stones in the foreground and the cross elevated above the horizon. In Courbet's final painting (Fig. 2c) the conception has been very much changed and deepened in content; the whole procession is arrested, the scene is concentrated about the central grave, and the form of the landscape adjusted to this new center. Around it are grouped the mourners, from the children at the left to the oldest men, in costumes of the seventeen-nineties. Even this version is related to popular engravings. For in the images of the *Steps of Life* (*Les Degrés des Âges*), individuals graded in age form a clear semi-circle or arch around a scene of burial (Fig. 2d).²⁰ Before the French Revolution the central space was filled with a Last Judgment; later it was sometimes secularized by a simple hearse and a symbolic growth, a rose-bush, a sheaf of wheat, a vine—plants in various stages of development, from spring to autumn.²¹ That Courbet copied such images is difficult to prove, but the resemblance is evident.

In 1850 he collaborated in the production of a "popular image." It is a lithograph rather than a wood-cut in the traditional manner, but even in its more modern technique it reproduces a type of popular art.²² His image of the apostle, Jean Journet (Fig. 1d), is part of a broadside, including a poem in couplets, a "Complainte" to be sung to the "Air de Joseph."²³ Journet was an independent Fourierist missionary, a man of solemn and irrepressible candor in his radical evangelism; Champfleury has described him in his collection of



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Le retour du marché, par Courbet, maître peintre.

Rien n'égale l'enthousiasme produit sur le public par les tableaux de Courbet. — Voilà de la réalité vraie, mais clair ni flou. — Ou est-ce point le point de l'école, et la absurde tradition de l'antique Tout y est vrai. Heureux et gai. Courbet avait dit: «Il n'y a pas de point de vue».

Fig. 1a Caricature of Courbet's *Retour de la Foire*.



Fig. 1b Popular woodcut of an assassination, ca. 1850.



Fig. 1c Courbet: *L'Aumône du mendiant*.

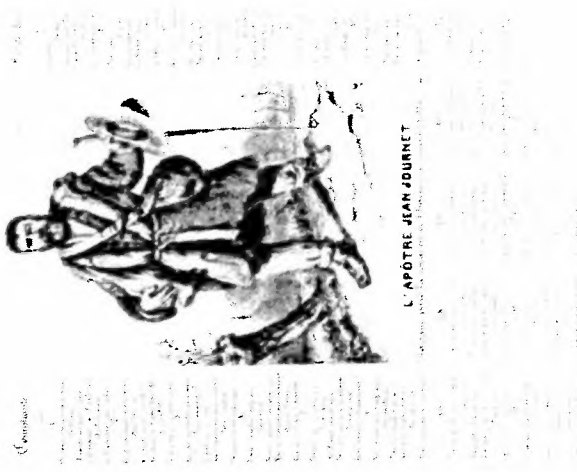


Fig. 1d Courbet: *Jean Journet*. Lithograph, 9½" x 6¾". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1932.



Fig. 2a Courbet: Drawing for *L'Enterrement à Ornans*. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Besançon.



Fig. 2c Courbet: *L'Enterrement à Ornans*. Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 2b *Souvenir Mortuaire*. Popular woodcut, ca. 1830. Bibl. Ste-Genève, Paris.

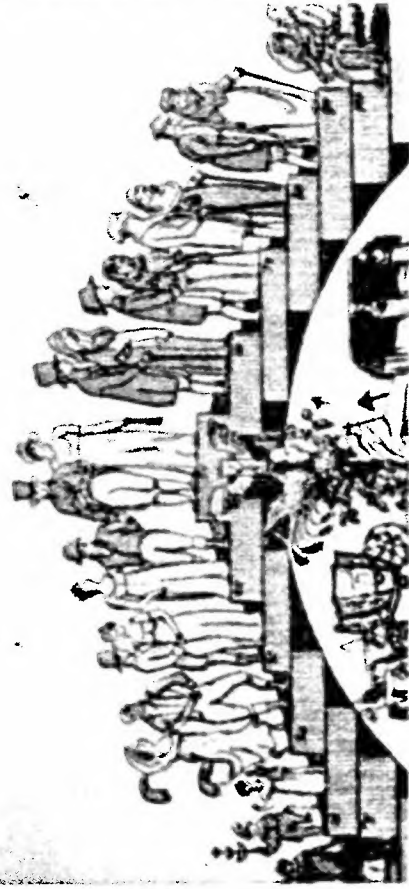


Fig. 2d *Les Degrés des Ages*. French popular print. Early 19th century.

Excentriques.²⁴ Courbet shows him setting out to convert the world, advancing with staff in hand, like the *Juif Errant* of the popular prints. The form of the lithograph framed by the field of verses belongs to the broadsides of the early nineteenth century; there is in this secular apostle dominating the horizon something of the saints, and especially of the pilgrim Saint Jacques, of the religious broadsides.²⁵

Courbet, moreover, made drawings for books addressed to a popular, sometimes uncultured and philistine, audience, unlike Delacroix who illustrated Goethe and Shakespeare. Courbet's illustrations are of cheap anti-clerical tracts, the "Death of Johnny the Rat-Catcher"²⁶ and the "Merry Tales of the Curés";²⁷ or of a book on petit-bourgeois types, *Le Camp des Bourgeois*, for which he provided drawings after photographs;²⁸ or images of workmen digging and sowing, to accompany the work-songs in a book of popular songs of the provinces, collected by Champfleury.²⁹

His paintings of work repeat a common theme of popular art, the *Métiers*.³⁰ Courbet does not represent the advanced forms of modern industry—they had already appeared in paintings of the late thirties³¹—but the hand-work of the villages, the traditional occupations which had previously been represented on a small scale.³² He monumentalizes the *Knife-Grinders*, the *Tinker*, the *Stone-Breakers*, the *Winnowers*; and besides these, he paints the *Hunter*, the *Poacher*, the *Vintner*, the *Harvesters* and the *Faggot-Gatherer*. In the late forties and fifties, the mere representation of labor on the scale of the *Stone-Breakers* and *Knife-Grinders* was politically suggestive. The lower classes, and especially the workers, had emerged as a factor in politics; and the slogan of the *Droit au Travail* was the chief one for the workers in the February revolution and in the disorders which followed.³³ Already in the forties there had appeared a book by de la Bédollière, *Les Métiers*,³⁴ illustrated with engravings (after Monnier) of the different popular occupations;³⁵ it was designed, as the author said, to awaken interest in the people, not from a radical viewpoint so much but to effect a philanthropic reconciliation of the opposed classes.³⁶

Courbet's popular themes are therefore sometimes considered

merely tendentious and doctrinaire, the result of his friendship with Proudhon. This view disregards his identification with the people and the precise content of his pictures. Even his notorious anti-clerical painting of the drunken *curés*³⁷ has a popular rather than partisan origin. The representation of the peasants under an image of the Virgin on the roadside, amused by the drunkenness of the clergy, says nothing of the doctrines and sacraments of the church, but corresponds to the cynical proverbs and tales of the religious peasantry whose folklore, even in a Catholic country like France, reveals without exception an underlying malice and hostility to the clergy as a class.³⁸ If one compares Courbet's attitude with the erudite constructions of his admirer, the philosopher-painter, Chenavard,³⁹ who must locate the church in a vast cycle of world history in order to show its historical limitations, it becomes obvious how rustic and popular in feeling is Courbet's satirical image. Even Proudhon in his commentary on the picture had to admit that the criticism of the Church here was only implicit.⁴⁰

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Courbet's political radicalism, his relations with Proudhon and his part in the Commune seem to be secondary to his goal as an artist; but they are characteristic of his personality with its provincial and plebeian self-consciousness in the Paris of an age of great social struggles. His feeling of superiority as an artist was justified for him by his indigenous relation to the masses. In letters and public statements, he affirmed that he alone of the artists of his time expressed the sentiments of the people and that his art was in essence democratic.⁴¹ He took a hearty delight in painting the landscape, the individuals and the life of his native village of Ornans on a monumental scale, and thereby imposed on the *Salon* spectator his judgment of the social importance of this world. Daumier, in a caricature of 1853, represented the stupefaction of countrymen before the paintings of Cour-

bet at the *Salon*,⁴² but the artist himself wrote from Ornans to Champfleury of the *Casseurs de Pierres*: "Les vignerons, les cultivateurs, que ce tableau séduit beaucoup, prétendent que j'en ferais un cent que je n'en ferais pas un plus vrai."⁴³ While painting the *Enterrement*, he corresponded with his friends in Paris about the progress of the work, describing how he got his models, and how they posed for him; every one, he said, wanted to be in the picture.⁴⁴ With the *curé* he argued about religion; and the grave-digger regretted that the cholera which had struck the nearby village had passed by Ornans and cheated him of a good harvest. He ends one of these letters with an account of the carnival at Ornans in which he took part.⁴⁵ In his large allegorical painting, the *Atelier*, he presents around him in the studio his two worlds, at the right, the world of art, including his patron Bruyas, his literary and musical friends, Baudelaire, Buchon, Champfleury and Promayet; on the other side, the people, in their homeliness, poverty and simple interests.⁴⁶ The German *brasserie* in Paris, where realism as a movement was hatched, is described by Champfleury as a Protestant village, in its rustic manners and conviviality.⁴⁷ The leader, Courbet, was a "*compagnon*," a handshaker, a great talker and eater, strong and tenacious like a peasant, the precise opposite of the dandy of the thirties and forties. His behavior in Paris was consciously popular; he spoke in an evident *patois*, smoked, sang and jested like a man of the people. Even his technique of painting impressed academic observers as plebeian and domestic in its freedom; for he used knife and thumb, worked from jars, rubbed and scraped, improvising directly from memory, without applying the learned devices of the school. Du Camp wrote that he painted pictures, "comme on cire des bottes."⁴⁸ In Ornans he framed the *Enterrement* with plain boards of local fir; and it was shown in this village and the provincial center, Besançon, before being sent to the *Salon*. In a letter to his patron, Bruyas, in speaking of a plan for a private show in Paris, he draws across the letter in a naïve domestic style a view of the exhibition building, very much like the booth of a circus, with peaked roof and pennant.⁴⁹ (Fig. 3a).

Courbet's taste for the people was thoroughly personal and in his blood. But it was also nourished and directed by the artistic and social movements of his time. Before 1848, he had painted romantic, poetic subjects as well as his provincial world; after 1848, the realistic representation of the people became for him a conscious program. The early romantics had already created a sentiment for folk traditions; but they valued the exotic primitive, whether historically or geographically remote, more than the contemporary primitive of their own region.⁵⁰ Toward 1840, there arose a more insurgent taste for the people, as if in preparation for the coming struggles. Michelet, Louis Blanc and Lamartine published their histories of the French Revolution in praise of the heroism and the love of liberty of the French people. A new doctrine, evangelical fiction of popular life was created by George Sand, Lamartine and Eugène Sue, and the writings of workers were hopefully welcomed as the foundations of a coming proletarian culture. This literature might be sentimental, melodramatic and vague in its social characterizations; but to keener, independent minds the conflicts of the time, the material requirements of society and the impressive conquests of the scientific method gradually suggested a new standard of exactness in the observation of social life. There was a constant criticism of manners, institutions and ideas, and the awareness of the differences within society and the concept of a social mechanism and climate, enriched for the next half century most writing and insight into the individual. It is in this environment of the late forties that realism and the folk could be united in a common program. Even Flaubert who disavowed romantic taste⁵¹ for the primitive and the "socialist" art of the forties, was nevertheless imbued throughout his life with the interest in the modern, the scientific, the popular and primitive which had occupied the young radicals of 1848.

In the immediate "realist" circle of Courbet, three young writers, Buchon, Dupont and Champfleury, were inspired by the life of the people and by the forms of folk art.

The poet, Max Buchon, was a friend of Courbet since their

school days in Besançon.⁵² His first book of romantic verses had been illustrated by the painter in 1839.⁵³ They were both ardent admirers of their compatriot, Proudhon; and Buchon, for his active part in the Second Republic, was exiled by Louis Napoleon in 1851. He appears in the *Enterrement* and the *Atelier* and was also painted in a life-size portrait by his friend.⁵⁴ In Paris he was known at first as the author of *La Soupe au Fromage*, the battle song of the bohemian realists of the late forties, and for his translation of Hebel, a German poet who wrote in Alsatian dialect about peasant and village life. His own works describe the peasants and landscape of his native region, of which he collected the folk-tales and songs. Gautier speaks of him as "a kind of Courbet of poetry, very realistic, but also very true, which is not the same thing."⁵⁵ Buchon was not only attached to his native province as a poetic world; he believed that the character of the people was the source of individual creativeness. In a book on realism published during his exile in Switzerland in 1856, he wrote that "the most inexorable protest against the professors and pastiches is popular art."⁵⁶ The pre-eminence of Courbet and Proudhon within their different fields was due to their common "puissante carrure franc-comtoise"; and in describing the genius of Courbet, he introduces, perhaps for the first time in the criticism of a contemporary painter, the concept of an instinctive folk-creativeness as the ground of great individual art. Courbet's painting, he says, is calm, strong and healthy, the fruit of a natural and spontaneous productivity ("il produit ses oeuvres tout aussi simplement qu'un pommier produit des pommes"). rooted in his own characteristics and the qualities of his native province. Courbet is ignorant of books and entirely self-taught as a painter, but understands things through sympathy with plain people and through "an enormous power of intuition."

For a time almost as close to Courbet was the poet Pierre Dupont,⁵⁷ the author of *Les Boeufs* and of the *Chant des Ouvriers* (1846), which Baudelaire called the "Marseillaise of labor." They were good friends from 1846 and spent vacations in the country together.⁵⁸ Dupont was the leading writer of songs for the people, some of them political and militant, others more idyllic, about the

peasants and the country and the various occupations.⁵⁹ Like his friend's pictures, Dupont's songs were regarded as rustic and criticized for their naiveté, their clumsiness and realism.⁶⁰ The music, which he composed himself, was based on authentic folk melodies. His *L'Incendie: Chant des Pompiers*, is remarkably close in spirit to the great unfinished picture of the firemen by Courbet, interrupted by the coup d'état of December 2, 1851.⁶¹ Other subjects of Courbet appear in the *Muse Populaire* of Dupont: the *métiers*, the hunters, the cattle, the landscapes, the scenes of country life, all pictured with great tenderness.⁶² His political songs express in a collective language that radical democratic sentiment which we hear again in more blustering tones when Courbet speaks of himself as a sovereign individual, as a government opposed to the ruling state.⁶³

Où marches-tu, gai compagnon?

Je m'en vais conquérir la terre;

J'ai remplacé Napoléon,

Je suis le prolétaire.⁶⁴

Dupont's art is popular in more than theme and feeling; it is very simple in form, with short, easily sung stanzas, repeated phrases and primitive refrains. It has the freshness of old folk-songs and was appreciated for these qualities by Gautier⁶⁵ and Baudelaire.⁶⁶ It was in fact the songs of Dupont that suggested to Baudelaire that all poetry is essentially a utopian protest against injustice, a desire for freedom and happiness.⁶⁷

Courbet, too, attempted to compose popular songs. An example has been published by Silvestre in his history of living artists.⁶⁸ They are trivial and crude, gay masculine songs of the *brasserie*. Courbet thought himself a musician and wanted to take part in the national competition for popular song in 1848.⁶⁹

The third of Courbet's friends, the novelist and critic Champfleury,⁷⁰ was the leader of the young literary realists of 1850 and the author of the first general history of popular imagery.

Champfleury, like Courbet, was a provincial, but of a more cultured family; his father was the secretary of the municipality of Laon, and his brother, Edouard Fleury, was the leading archaeologist and local historian of the *département*. He came to Paris in 1839 at eighteen, only a little before Courbet, but they did not meet until 1848. His first writings belong to the late romantic style of the *école fantaisiste*. They are short stories and sketches about odd types and the corners of Paris life, alternately humorous and grotesque. Champfleury was anxious to succeed in Paris, where he shared the life of Murger's *Bohème* and followed closely the main literary movements of the forties. He felt himself to be an apprentice who had first to learn the trade and to acquire a journalistic *petite manière* which would enable him to earn a living. In his *Souvenirs* he tells how he was torn for a time by two interests, a Monnier-like realism and German romantic, sentimental poetry. In 1849 and 1850, he was caught up in the stream of insurgent realism with its taste for the contemporary and popular, and was able to maintain himself in it because of his first-hand experience of provincial life and his plebeian consciousness among the better educated Parisian writers. He had discovered the *Le Nains* (artists from his home town of Laon) around 1845, and in 1850 published a brochure in which he described them as painters of reality. The *Le Nains* were already objects of modern taste in the eighteenth forties; Charles Blanc in 1846 compares the brothers Leleux (Adolphe and Armand) with them;⁷¹ they painted Breton peasant and work scenes and were considered realists. But Champfleury's conversion to realism seems to have been largely influenced by the example of Courbet's imposing art and by his friendship with Dupont and Buchon, who introduced him to folk literature and the artistic possibilities of themes of lower-class life.⁷² The choice of such subjects was a central point in the realist doctrine, perhaps as essential as the ideas of the little realists about method and style, and was justified by Champfleury on several grounds.⁷³ The lower classes were the most important in society and it was in their life that the underlying social mechanism could be revealed. They were, moreover, a new and unlimited

subject, more attractive than the rich and the *élite* by their great sincerity, a virtue which for the realists was almost the whole of art. Finally, their own literature is valuable and suggestive; their songs and legends include masterpieces of realism. Champfleury admired the inherent good taste of the people and imagined that they would be spontaneous allies and appreciate the sincerity and vigor of modern realist works.

As the chief journalistic defender of Courbet in the early fifties, Champfleury was publicly identified as the apostle of realism, and assumed the responsibility of its theoretical defense, although he sometimes disavowed the name as misleading and vague; it was less adequate than the slogan of "sincerity in art" which he opposed to *l'art pour l'art*.⁷⁴ His own stories and novels took on a more intimate, realistic air, shedding the elements of fantasy and the grotesque that he had cultivated up to 1848. But he preserved always a humor and sentimentality that his writing had had from the beginning. Beside the large, robust painting of Courbet, his realism was a "littile manner," and it is surprising now that they could be regarded in their time as similar expressions. During the eighteen-fifties Champfleury produced a regular stream of stories and novels which established him as a leader of the realistic movement in literature. But by 1860, he was dwarfed by Flaubert, and in the coming decades the works of the de Goncourts and Zola overshadowed his slight and often badly written novels. Historical studies took more and more of his time; he became an expert on old pottery and was appointed an official of the national factory at Sèvres, a post which he held until his death in 1889. During the last twenty-five years of his life, he published many volumes on the history of caricature, popular imagery, folk literature, patriotic fables, romantic vignettes, Monnier and the *Le Nains*.⁷⁵ These books were based on extensive reading and search for original documents, and though very limited as historical studies, were pioneering works. In most of them his curiosity was directed by the original impulse of 1848 toward realism and popular art, however far he might have moved later from the ideals of that time.

What is most important for us in Champfleury's *History of Popular Imagery* is the fact that he attributes an absolute artistic value to the naïve engravings made for the peasants and villagers.

Popular poetry and songs had long before attracted the attention of writers; Montaigne, Molière and Malherbe spoke with enthusiasm of the songs of the common people and preferred certain of them to the most highly civilized works.⁷⁶ Their judgments, which were isolated in their time, became general in the eighteen-forties and fifties. Folk songs were intensively collected and studied then.⁷⁷ It was recognized that they did not follow the rules of modern European poetry and music; their rhythms were strange, the rhymes vague and imperfect, the combinations inharmonious, yet they were considered admirable—"il en résulte des combinaisons mélodiques d'une étrange qui paraît atroce et qui est peut-être magnifique," wrote George Sand.⁷⁸ Other forms of popular literature were enthusiastically investigated in the middle of the century. Nisard published in 1854 his pioneer work on the literature of colportage with illustrations of popular prints,⁷⁹ and about the same time Magnin brought out a history of marionnettes⁸⁰ to confirm the universality and dignity of a taste which was then cultivated by devotees of popular art, especially by George Sand and the young realist, Duranty.⁸¹ Flaubert, who brought his friends, Turgeneff and Feydeau, to the fair at Rouen to see the puppet-play of the Temptation of St. Anthony, borrowed from it some lines for his own version of 1849.⁸²

The corresponding taste for contemporary popular images came more slowly. Perhaps the directly representative character of the pictorial sign and the established standards of resemblance stood in the way. They were beginning to be noticed, however, by the writers and artists in the eighteen-thirties. In describing the interior of a farmhouse in Auvergne in the *Peau de Chagrin* (1830-1831), Balzac pointed to the images in "blue, red and green, which represent 'Credit is Dead,' the Passion of Jesus-Christ and the Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard" (the three bulwarks of society—commerce, religion and

the army). He knew also how to reveal the spirit of the countryside in characterizing the signboard of the village tavern in *Les Paysans* (1844-5).⁸³ Decamps reproduced a rustic religious print in a painting of a Catalan interior in the eighteen-forties.⁸⁴ And with a real awareness of the qualities of the primitive style, Töpffer illustrated one of his *Nouveaux Voyages en Zigzag* with a copy of a popular image, *Histoire de Cécile*, that he had seen on this trip.⁸⁵

For these writers and artists, the popular images had only a relative value, or were interesting as parts of the environment that they were describing. Even Baudelaire, with his extraordinary perceptiveness and romantic respect for the primitive imagination, was still attached to norms of painting that limited his judgment of primitive styles. He might observe as Goethe did the infallible harmony of coloring of the tattooed faces of Indians, and recognize in their whole bearing a Homeric elevation.⁸⁶ Yet when he wishes to account for the mediocrity of modern sculpture (*Pourquoi la sculpture est ennuyeuse*),⁸⁷ he points to the more primitive character of sculpture as an art, as if in ironical reply to the classicist pretension that sculpture is the highest art;⁸⁸ it is rather the art *par excellence* of savages, "who carve fetishes very adroitly long before they undertake painting, which is an art of profound reasoning and requires for its enjoyment a special initiation."⁸⁹ "Sculpture is much nearer to nature and that is why our peasants who are so delighted by a piece of wood or stone that has been industriously turned, remain blank at the sight of a beautiful picture." In its highest state, among civilized peoples, sculpture is a complementary art, colored and subordinate to architecture; but now having lost this connection, it has become isolated and empty, returning to its primitive condition. Our contemporary sculptors, he says, are "Caraiibes," fetishistic artisans.⁹⁰

When he wrote these lines in reviewing the *Salon* of 1846, he apparently thought no better of the qualities of primitive painting. In his little known *Salon Caricatural*⁹¹ of the same year, he resorts to the conventional parodies of archaic forms in ridiculing certain pictures as child-like or savage because of their rigidity or bright colors.

In contrast to those views Champfleury found in primitive and

contemporary folk arts qualities that justified their comparison with the highest civilized art. "The idol," he said, "cut in the trunk of a tree by savages, is nearer to Michelangelo's *Moses* than most of the statues in the annual salons."⁹² The loud colors of the popular prints are disdained as barbarous, but they are "less barbarous than the mediocre art of our exhibitions in which a universal cleverness of hand makes two thousand pictures look as if they have come from the same mold." Modern folk art shares the qualities of the first wood-cuts of the fifteenth century. "The naïve execution of the *Biblia Pauperum* has an equivalent only in certain engravings of the Bibliothèque Bleue of Troyes. The stammering of children is the same in all countries . . . it offers the charm of innocence, and the charm of the modern *imagiers* comes from the fact that they have remained children . . . they have escaped the progress of the art of the cities."⁹³

In Champfleury's comparison of the savage idol with the *Moses* of Michelangelo, there is perhaps an echo of the posthumous work of Rodolphe Töpffer, *Réflexions et menus propos d'un peintre genevois*, which was published in 1848 and again in 1853 and 1865. In his sprightly, amiable style, Töpffer devotes two chapters to the drawings of children: *Où il est question des petits bonshommes*, and *Où l'on voit pourquoi l'apprenti peintre est moins artiste que le gamin pas encore apprenti*.⁹⁴ In the latter, he asserts: "il y a moins de dissemblance entre Michel-Ange gamin griffonneur et Michel-Ange devenu immortel artiste, qu'entre Michel-Ange devenu un immortel artiste et Michel-Ange encore apprenti."⁹⁵ The beginnings of art are not to be found in the legendary effort to trace the profile of a lover, but in children's drawings. Art exists already complete in the latter. The same mannikin forms appear in Herclaneum and Geneva, in Timbuctoo and Quimper-Corentin. But there are "petits bonshommes et petits bonshommes," the merely imitative of nature and the artistic expressions of a thought. Send the *gamin* to an art school and with his greater knowledge of the object, he will have lost the vivacity and the artistic intention he had possessed before; the attributes of the sign will replace the artistic beauty of which it is the sign. Savages, as artists, show the same force as the "gamins de nos rues et nos tam-

bours de regiment." As images of man, the idols of Easter Island with their hideous features and strange proportions resemble nothing in nature and hardly make sense. But considered as signs of a conception, "they are, on the contrary, cruel, hard and superior, brute divinities, but grandiose and beautiful; as signs they have clarity and meaning; they live, speak and proclaim that a creative thought has been infused in them and is manifested through them."¹⁰⁰

Töpffer could arrive so early in the nineteenth century at this sympathetic judgment of the drawings of children because of his personality and special experience. That art was not imitation, but the expression of "ideas," that the natural forms were only "signs" of the conceptions of the artist, and historically relative to a time and place, all this was a commonplace of the aesthetic theory of his time. But Töpffer, as a gifted artist compelled by a defect of vision to give up in his youth the ambition to be a painter and to restrict himself to drawing; as a Swiss schoolmaster devoted to the boys with whom he had made his pioneer Alpine voyages in zigzag; as an illustrator of his own playful stories; and as an original caricaturist who had reflected on his art and exploited the primitive-graffitesque side of caricatural drawing,¹⁰¹ he was more readily able to see the universality of art as a spontaneous expression of an idea in the child as well as the professional painter. In his enthusiasm for the child, there is perhaps also a connection with the enlightened, advanced traditions of Swiss pedagogy.

Töpffer's book was well known in Paris where he was warmly recommended as a writer by Sainte-Beuve¹⁰² and discussed at length by Théophile Gautier in his *L'art moderne* (1856).¹⁰³

Gautier regretted that Töpffer had attacked the theory of *l'art pour l'art* as a senseless formalism; but he was enchanted by his assertion of the superiority of children's art. He now discovered in Töpffer's own drawings the very qualities Töpffer had found in the children's. Comparing him with Cruikshank, Gautier wrote: "There is in the Genevan less wit and more naïveté: one sees that he has studied very attentively the little *bonshommes* which children chalk on the walls with lines worthy of Etruscan art in their grandeur and

simplicity. . . . He must have been equally inspired by the Byzantines of Epinal. . . . He learned from them the art of rendering his thought in a few decisive strokes without losing any of its strength."¹⁰⁴

We see here that the primitive is regarded not only as an example of a universal naïveté, but as the source of a conscious naïveté in modern art. Yet only a few years before in 1851 Gautier had dismissed Courbet's *Enterrement à Ornans* as rustic and had compared it with tobaccoconists' signs.¹⁰⁵ Between 1851 and 1856, taste had apparently changed, and Töpffer's book, with its revelation of the creativeness of children, undoubtedly had much to do with this new opinion. Champfleury's first articles on popular images had also begun to appear since 1850.¹⁰⁶

How radical were these judgments which extended the concept of the ideal primitive (a generation before the circle of Gauguin and the first scientific writings on children's art) to include the *art* of children, the lower classes and savages, may be gauged from the attitude of Baudelaire. No French writer of the nineteenth century has written with more passion of the child as the prototype of the painter and poet of genius.¹⁰⁷ Yet the art of the child or the savage has no interest for him; it is clumsy, imperfect, the result of a struggle between the idea and the hand. When Guys began to make pictures for the first time, in his maturity, he drew, according to Baudelaire, "like a barbarian, like a child, angry at the clumsiness of his fingers and the recalcitrance of his tool. I have seen a great number of these primitive daubs and I confess that most people who know, or think they know, painting, would not have been able to divine the latent genius which dwelt in these tenebrous sketches. . . . When he comes upon one of these early efforts, he tears it or burns it with a most amusing shame and indignation."¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, in learning by himself all the tricks of the trade, Guys preserved "from his first ingenuousness what was necessary in order to give an unexpected seasoning to his rich gifts."¹⁰⁹ With a paradoxical rhetoric, Baudelaire describes the genius of this dandy and acute observer of the elegances of Parisian society as childlike and barbarian in its most subtle aspects and presents the child as the pure archetype of the "painter of modern life." The child is no

longer for Baudelaire, as for the romantics and Töpffer, an example of free imagination, but is now regarded as a creature who, in opening his eyes on the world, discovers and remembers the appearances of things with an incomparable intensity of feeling. In Baudelaire's child, the direct vision of unsuspected colorings and shapes is an ecstatic experience. "L'enfant voit tout en nouveauté; il est toujours ivre."¹⁰⁶ But in this intoxication of the visual, the child automatically preserves an ideal and barbarian clarity. "I wish to speak of an inevitable, synthetic, infantile barbarism, which often remains visible in a perfect art (Mexican, Egyptian or Ninivite) and which is derived from the need to see things in the large and to consider them especially in the effect of their ensemble."¹⁰⁷ Baudelaire thus attributes to the child two moments of vision: the synthetic, and the more realistic, discriminating perception of details; he speaks of the joy of the child—destined to become a celebrated painter—who discovers the variegated, nuanced color of the father's naked body.¹⁰⁸ If he is indifferent to the drawings of the child, Baudelaire has transformed him, however, into a modern sensibility, penetrated and obsessed by the beauty of the external world.¹⁰⁹ His imaginary child, stirred by the shock of sensation, forecasts impressionism and the later theories of art as a purified, intense visibility. It owes something to the realism of the fifties, which in restricting the scope of painting to the immediately apparent, deepened the awareness of the visual.

Courbet himself belongs to the period of transition from the cultured artist of historical painting, who moves with an elaborate baggage of literature, history and philosophy and whose works have to be understood as well as seen, to the artist of the second half of the nineteenth century, who relies on sensibility alone, working directly from nature or from feeling, an eye rather than a mind or an imagination. Beside the great masters of the preceding period, this newer type of artist was for a critic like Baudelaire a mere artisan, ignorant and plebeian. Baudelaire, who belonged to the generation of Courbet and was twice painted by him, was still attached to the aristocratic view and despised realism; he speaks often of the difference between Delacroix as a sovereign, universal mind, the consort of Shakespeare and

[illegible]

Fig. 3a Courbet: Letter to Bruyas with Sketch of Circus Pavilion.



Fig. 3b Courbet: L'Atelier. Louvre, Paris.

Goethe, and the rude *manœuvres* whose works now fill the *Salons*. To enjoy Courbet in 1850, one had to accept works with banal subjects, painted without an evident rhetoric of classical or romantic beauty, and revealing a personality whose response to nature and social life, however decided and hearty, seemed uncultured and even boorish beside the aristocratic inventiveness of Ingres and Delacroix.¹¹⁰ The imaginative aspect of his art was not at once apparent in the meanings and gestures of the objects painted; it had to be discovered in the very fabric of the painting (as Delacroix later recognized); so that Courbet, who vigorously opposed *l'art pour l'art* and spoke of expressing his time, could also become for the young artists of the sixties the modern example of a pure painter.¹¹¹ To his positive conception of nature as given completely in sense experience corresponded his conception of the painting as a self-sufficient material object.

In his painting of the *Atelier* (Fig. 3b) where Baudelaire is shown in the right corner, absorbed in a book, Courbet has represented with great tenderness and an admirable naïveté a little child drawing a *bonhomme* on a sheet of paper stretched out on the floor (Fig. 3c). Since he calls this work an *Allégorie Réelle*¹¹² of the most significant aspects of his life during the past seven years and challenges the spectator to divine the sense of all the parts, we can be sure that the child has a symbolic meaning for Courbet. In the center is the painter himself at work, at the right is the world of art, which he calls the living world,¹¹³ formed by his closest friends, including Baudelaire and Buchon; nearest to him sits Champfleury, and at the feet of his defender is the child drawing its mannikin figure.¹¹⁴ A second child gazes at the painting of Courbet. On the other side he has placed on the ground a bandit's plumed hat, a dagger and a guitar, the cast-off paraphernalia of romantic art.¹¹⁵ In painting the child in this manner at the feet of Champfleury, the student of folk art, Courbet affirms, I think, Champfleury's defense of his work as naïve and his conception of naïveté as the ground of all creativeness. Perhaps this circumscribes Courbet's intention too narrowly, but there is undoubtedly here a metaphor of the painter's avowed originality and naïveté.¹¹⁶



Fig. 3c Courbet: Detail from *L'Atelier*. Louvre, Paris.

Champfleury's interest in the art of the child, the peasant and the savage goes back to his first years in Paris, before his meeting with Courbet. In his story, *Chien-Cailou*, written in 1845 about the engraver, Rodolphe Bresdin, he tells how the hero, having run away from his brutal father, fell in with a group of *rapins*. "He was only ten years old; he drew in so naive a fashion that they hung up all his works in the studio . . . he thought of making engravings, but his engravings resembled his drawings; there was something of the primitive German, the Gothic, the naïf and the religious which made the whole studio laugh . . . he was an artist like Albert Dürer with as much naïveté."¹¹⁷

In his own writing, Champfleury tried to attain naïveté also; the letters to his mother describe his assiduous efforts to cultivate this quality. "I have arrived at naïveté, which is everything in the arts," he tells her in 1849.¹¹⁸ He read Diderot especially as a model of unaffected directness in prose.¹¹⁹ He admired the simple strength of popular songs and found in them a great truth to life. The simplest, the most naïve art was also the most veracious; in judging a song the peasant does not say it is beautiful, but it is true.¹²⁰ Hence Champfleury could believe that realism and naïveté, far from being antagonistic, are complementary and united in the single concept of sincerity.¹²¹

Yet in his taste for popular prints and songs, Champfleury seems to contradict his notion that realism is the indispensable art of *modernité*. In his book on popular images (1869), he recommends in the concluding chapters on the art of the future two opposed things: the preservation of popular imagery as a conservative didactic instrument, conciliation being the "supreme goal" of art, and the further development of realism by vast murals of modern industry in the railroad stations and public buildings.¹²² On the one hand, realism is the lyric of modern progress; on the other hand, the primitive art and the sentiments of the peasantry are the bearers of an eternal wisdom. Thus the movement, attacked for its positivism and materialism, also promoted the taste for primitive arts which were to serve later as an example in the repudiation of realism and the idea of progress.

It is true that some critics looked on realism in its positivist aspect as the product of a peasant mentality, the peasant being described as sceptical and narrowly focused on the here and now. "The exclusive love of exactness is the root of the character of peasants, usurers and liberal bourgeois,—realists in the full sense of the word, who always make an exact count."¹²³ But the art of the peasant is hardly realistic in this sense, and the notion that realism springs from a peasant mind disregards its precise content and the complexity of its forms. The peasant or lower middle class origins of the realist painters and authors may have determined the direction of their art, but they determined it only in Paris, where these writers and artists encountered a higher culture and consciousness of social life. The detailed and exact description of contemporary manners which was for Champfleury one of the criteria of sincerity in modern prose is inconceivable in the literature of the folk. The interest of Courbet and Champfleury in folk art never entailed for them the imitation of its simpler, shadowless styles. The seemingly regressive tendencies in the looser and more static compositions of Courbet are bound up with unprimitive conceptions of a new colonistic, tonal and material unity of the painting and prepare the way for Impressionism. Champfleury had a presentiment of this when he compared the freer groupings of Courbet, his "horror of composition," with the work of Velasquez. And he expressed the same idea in arguing that the novel, relatively formless but realistic and open to an unlimited range of experience, was the truly modern art, as against the artificially contrived verse and the narrow scope of the romantics.

The seeming contradiction in Champfleury's twin program of folk art and murals of industry arises, I think, from the unstable, problematic character of the social movements which promoted realism and which terminated in the dictatorship of the Second Empire.

In the beginning, the realism of Champfleury's circle was the art that discovered the life of the lower classes; it derived from their growing consciousness and importance a great self-confidence as a progressive and necessary art. Since these classes threatened the existing order, the sympathetic preoccupation with them in art was a radical interest. And at a time when critical observation of social life was a

revolutionary force, the ideals of directness and realism in painting or literature were politically suspect. The mere presentation of the lower classes on the monumental scale of former images of history was an aggressive act, a displacement of the ruling class by its chief enemies.¹²⁴ In 1850, the difference in scale alone already distinguished Courbet from the contemporary painters of peasant genre. Like the great size of his signature,¹²⁵ the size and energy of his paintings were an irritating provocation to his conservative critics.

But this initial radical aspect of the realist movement was very short-lived. In his judgments of folk art in 1850 and even during 1848, Champfleury was already affected by the political reaction and the desire for peace. Within a few years the people, that vague undifferentiated mass on which the radical leaders of the forties had placed their hopes for the emancipation of society, had changed its face and color. The events of 1848 to 1851 had made clear the sharp differences of interest among them, the stratification of peasants and small proprietors, of factory workers and artisans, the first group attached to its soil, conservative, often religious; the others, without possessions, brought together in work and more apt to independent resistance and struggle. If the immediate likelihood of socialism was shattered by the events of these four years, for the first time the working class appeared as a revolutionary force, concerned with its own interests. The defeat of the Paris workers in June 1848, the establishment of the dictatorship of Louis Napoleon in 1851, rested in part on the support given to the upper classes by the mass of the peasantry, frightened by the spectres of revolution.¹²⁶ Champfleury, whose art moved between two regions, the Paris bohème and the petit-bourgeois life of his native province, had never been secure in his political views and vacillated constantly with the broad movement of events. Before 1848 he had written attacks on the Fourierists and socialists, criticizing all partisan or tendentious art.¹²⁷ In February 1848 he was editor with Baudelaire of the *Salut Public*, a republican newspaper of only two issues, with confused radical and religious slogans.¹²⁸ At this time he was an admirer of Proudhon.¹²⁹ But in June of the same year he became co-editor of *Le Bonhomme Richard*, *Journal de Franklin*,

with Wallon, who supported a new Holy Alliance of Germany, Russia and France.¹³⁰ A few months later, in August, he was among the collaborators of *L'Événement*, the moderate journal of Victor Hugo.¹³¹ He wrote then to his mother about the literary advantages of this association and his indifference to politics.¹³² In February 1849, although detached from politics, he declared himself anti-bourgeois and "red, rather than reactionary";¹³³ the bourgeois, he said, is still master under the Republic, but cannot last. He was invited in December 1849 to contribute to Proudhon's socialist journal, *La Voix du Peuple*, and published there his story, *Les Oies de Noël*.¹³⁴ He still felt himself to be completely unpolitical, but he wrote at this time: "Nous autres travaillons pour le peuple, et nous nous dévouons à cette grande cause."¹³⁵ The coup-d'état of December 1851, however, endangered him because of the censorship and his connection with the formerly republican journals.¹³⁶ To protect himself he turned for a while from literature to historical research on folk art and poetry.¹³⁷

But instead of abandoning the ideas about art which he had formed under the impact of 1848, he changed their content and tone. He was still attached to reality and the "people," but the latter were now regarded as the unchanging element in the nation and their own art as a profound lesson in resignation to life and the conciliation of opposed interests.¹³⁸ The eternal tasks of the peasant were recommended as a happy alternative to the inconstancies and revolutions of urban society. Already in 1848, while with Wallon, he had planned a series of articles on "all the poets who have sung the family";¹³⁹ and it was in the same year that he conceived the work on popular imagery and legends in order to calm the people in a period of insurrection and to teach them, as he said, the lesson of reconciliation by recalling their own traditional acceptance of destiny.¹⁴⁰ In this reaction to the violence of the barricades, he is a little like his friend Monnier's *Joseph Prudhomme* who retires in 1848 to his country estate and addresses the gardeners: "Bons villageois! hommes primitifs qui avez gardé, malgré les révolutions, le respect des supériorités sociales, c'est parmi vous que je veux couler mes jours."¹⁴¹

The disillusionment of Baudelaire, who had passed through the same experience of the Republic, took the form not only of a complete renunciation of politics, but a total disgust with society,¹⁴² from the bourgeoisie to the people, and a violent critique of the idea of progress. The material advance of society, he argued, adds nothing to its intellectual or spiritual resources; on the contrary, the present industrial age is also a period of cultural decay.¹⁴³ Champfleury's criticism was less bitter and drastic, for he felt less victimized than Baudelaire and could achieve his limited ambitions in the cosiness of his library. Whatever the implications of his doctrine, with its lower-class themes and direct, impersonal style, his own realistic writing from the beginning had been concerned mainly with the amusing or sentimental banalities of provincial life; the vast, disturbing spectacle of modern society and the struggles and process of social or self-discovery of sensitive individuals lay outside his art. In his books on popular art, he identified himself with the tranquil resigned villager, with his traditional wisdom, his sincerity and good humor, his unromantic fantasy, formed of emblems and ancient symbolic personages, like the *Bonhomme Misère* and the Wandering Jew, vehicles of timeless, simple truths. He finds in the conclusion of the *Bonhomme Misère*—"Misery will exist as long as the world exists"—and in this peasant's contentment with his little cabin a profound lesson for all humanity.¹⁴⁴ And he concludes his study of popular images with an account of Rethel's *Triumph of Death* of 1849 which teaches the people the futility of revolt.¹⁴⁵ The study of history, which in the beginning of the nineteenth century in France, was inspired by the great social struggles and the experience of change as a law of the present, the present being regarded as a crucial historical moment, was converted by Champfleury into a study of the persistence of the lower levels of culture, of the timeless arts and ideas of the people.¹⁴⁶ In this conversion he resembles his contemporary, Heinrich Riehl, the German historian of popular culture who undertook in the fifties a related investigation, literary and social, of the common people, especially the peasantry.¹⁴⁷ He, too, came to these studies as a result of the uprisings of 1848; but whereas Champfleury had been for a while

republican and never lost a certain conventional respect for the ideal of freedom, Riehl discovered in the events of 1848 a confirmation of his inborn conservatism and undertook the task of teaching the German nation that its true strength lay in its conservative peasant masses.

In proposing two arts, a traditional, popular art and a more realistic urban art, one conservative and didactic, the other reproducing the spectacle of modern progress, Champfleury satisfied perfectly and in the language of an official adviser the requirements of the regime of the third Napoleon by whom he had just been decorated.¹⁴⁸ This regime rested on the support of the peasants and on the extraordinary economic expansion and prosperity of France between 1850 and 1870. The latter assured the final triumph of realism, not in its plebeian or insurgent aspect, but as a personal aesthetic tendency toward the representation of the privately experienced and matter-of-fact world which culminated in Impressionism; the former determined the taste for the arts of the static peasantry and primitive cultures which in the crises and social pessimism at the end of the century could replace realism as models of a personal style.

The change in Champfleury affected his relations with Courbet. As the writer became more conservative, the painter grew more radical, although his art in the sixties had less political significance than in the early fifties, when the memory of the Republic and its suppression was still green. But it should be observed that in their first relations, Courbet was also unstable politically like Champfleury. They probably had already met in February 1848 when Courbet drew the headpiece, a barricade scene, for the newspaper of Champfleury and Baudelaire.¹⁴⁹ In his later writings, though he often mentions the painter, Champfleury never speaks of the *Salut Public* or this work of Courbet and indicates as their first contact his "discovery" of Courbet at the *Salon* of the spring of 1848.¹⁵⁰ In a review of that exhibition, he had singled out for its promise a painting of a *Walpurgis Night* (inspired by Goethe) over which Courbet subsequently painted his *Wrestlers*.¹⁵¹ At that time they were both romantics, and Courbet's

barriade drawing was no more the issue of a strong political conviction than Champfleury's editorship of the *Salut Public*. The painter wrote home that same spring and during the June fighting that he was opposed to the uprising, and that he preferred the method of intelligence.¹⁵² By 1851, Courbet seems to have become firmly republican.¹⁵³ When, in 1850-1851, he showed his new and more powerful pictures, the *Stone-Crushers*, the *Return from the Fair* and the *Burial at Ornans*, it was Champfleury who defended him in print and justified his new realism on artistic and social grounds. For several years their names were linked as the chief protagonists of realism, in spite of the great difference in the quality of their work; and there is little doubt that the possibility of defending Courbet helped to shape Champfleury's career as a writer. Courbet corresponded with him for a few years, painted his portrait and included him in a prominent place in the *Atelier*. Champfleury in turn wrote a novel, *Les Demoiselles Tourangeau*, about the family of Courbet, the fruit of a vacation in the Juras in 1856.¹⁵⁴ But by that time, they had begun to diverge and their relations were becoming strained. Champfleury, who was now accepted by the conservative *Revue des Deux Mondes*,¹⁵⁵ was embarrassed and exasperated by the personality of Courbet, his enormous, naïve vanity, his political associations and belligerence, which the public confused with realism as an aesthetic doctrine. In writing about Courbet in 1855, Champfleury could still quote Proudhon approvingly three times in the same article.¹⁵⁶ However, at the opening of Courbet's private Pavilion of Realism, he found the company of Proudhon at the exhibition boring and ridiculous.¹⁵⁷ He was also displeased with the *Atelier* because of the way in which he was represented, although in writing about the picture he criticized it on moral grounds.¹⁵⁸ He himself had annoyed Courbet by caricaturing the personality of his patron, Bruyas, in a novel.¹⁵⁹ By 1860, Champfleury was completely hostile to Courbet's work, but continued to publish articles about his old friend.¹⁶⁰ This champion of "sincerity in art" found the *Girls by the Seine* "frightful, frightful."¹⁶¹ and wrote to their common friend, Buchon, that Courbet was finished as an artist;¹⁶² he grudged him any talent beyond a mechanical compe-

tence in painting. In 1867 Champfleury accepted from the emperor, who had exiled Buchon and was despised by the writers and artists of his old group, the ribbon of the Legion of Honor; in 1870 the same award was rejected by Courbet with resounding publicity. Within a year, the painter was to take part in the Commune and to suffer for the destruction of the Vendôme column, which was maliciously attributed to him. Champfleury remained silent and did nothing for his former friend. And when, after the death of Courbet, a publication of his letters was planned, Champfleury refused to cooperate and perhaps destroyed some which might in the future throw an unpleasant light on his relations with Courbet.¹⁶³

Yet if Champfleury and Courbet moved farther apart politically, as artists they followed a similar path from an originally aggressive conception of realism, with something of the social preoccupations of the second Republic, toward a more personal, aestheticized view.¹⁶⁴ Courbet may pretend in the sixties that he is going to paint "socialist" pictures,¹⁶⁵ but this is a vague wish without substance or possibility of fulfillment. His marines of this period represent his true artistic impulse; and Champfleury, now remote from realism as a movement, could approve of them as the fruits of solitude and introspection and the vision "of something immaterial beyond Reality which detaches itself from the human heart and gives birth to élanes that observation alone is incapable of rendering."¹⁶⁶ But this former realist enemy of didacticism in art¹⁶⁷ now recommended to the state as the most reliable instrument of social harmony the folk images with their old conservative teachings.

There is already in Courbet's great *Enterrement* a trace of the double attitude of Champfleury to the events of 1848 and 1849. During a period of revolutionary violence and momentous political change, Courbet assembles the community about the grave. He was to say that "the only possible history is contemporary history,"¹⁶⁸ but here the history of man is like natural history and assumes a timeless and anonymous character, except in the costumes which show the historical succession of generations. The funeral custom replaces the occasion, the cause and effect of an individual death. The community

at the grave absorbs the individual. The anti-romantic conception implies too the tranquil, resigned spirit of reconciliation, that Champfleury considered the "supreme goal of art," and found only incompletely realized in Rethel's *Dance of Death*, a work that names Death as the only victor of the barricades. Thus the consciousness of the community, awakened by the revolution of 1848, appears for the first time in a monumental painting, in all its richness of allusion, already retrospective and inert.

NOTES

¹ They have been collected by Charles Léger, *Courbet selon les caricatures et les images*, Paris, 1920. See especially pp. 13, 15, 19, 20, 34, 74, 79, 85. Two are also reproduced by John Grand-Carteret, *Les Mœurs et la Caricature en France*, Paris, n.d., pp. 550, 551.

² Léger, *op. cit.*, p. 20, from the *Journal pour Rire*.

³ The opinions are collected by Riat, *Gustave Courbet*, Paris, 1906, pp. 86, 87; Léger, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 37; Estignard, *Gustave Courbet*, 1897, pp. 27-30. The critic of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Louis Geoffroy, wrote on March 1, 1851: "Evidemment M. Courbet est un homme qui se figure avoir tenu une grande rénovation, et ne s'aperçoit point qu'il ramène l'art tout simplement à son point de départ, à la grossièreté industrie des maîtres imagiers." On the criticism of realism in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, see the dissertation of Thaddeus E. Du Val, Jr., *The Subject of Realism in the Revue des Deux Mondes* (1831-1865), Philadelphia 1936; and for criticism of realism in general in this period, the dissertation of Bernard Weinberg, *French Realism: The Critical Reaction, 1830-1870*, The University of Chicago Libraries, Modern Language Association of America, 1937.

⁴ Léger, *op. cit.*, p. 34. "Peinture d'Auvergnat" is the phrase of Victor Fournel, who some years later wrote sympathetically on popular spectacles and on the street songs and singers of Paris: *Ce qu'on voit dans les rues de Paris*, Paris, 1856; *Les spectacles populaires et les artistes des rues*, Paris 1863. Cf. also de Banville's poem (1852): "... Je suis un réaliste."

Et contre l'idéal j'ai dressé ma baliste
J'ai créé l'art bonhomme, enfantin et naïf."

Cited by P. Martino, *Le roman réaliste sous le Second Empire*, Paris, 1913, p. 76.

⁵ Especially Ingres; see L. Rosenthal, *La peinture romantique*, Paris 1900, p. 62.

⁶ This is recorded by Philibert Audebrand, *Derniers Jours de la Bohème*, Paris, n.d., p. 110, but more than fifty years after the occasion.

⁷ In the essay "On the French School of Painting," 1840. In the same work, he criticizes the primitivism of the new Catholic school in France for its archaic forms and compares them with English playing cards.

⁸ Théophile Silvestre, *Histoire des Artistes Vivants. Etudes d'après nature*, Paris

1856, p. 269: "Le geste lui manque, ses scènes sont inertes" (on Courbet), and "Ingres est mort. Cette immobilité fait la honte de l'art."

⁹ This was recognized by Baudelaire when he remarked in his study of Guys, "Many people have accused of barbarism all painters whose vision is synthetic and simplifying, for example Corot, who begins by tracing first of all the main lines of a landscape, its framework and physiognomy." *Le peintre de la Vie Moderne*, in Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*, Paris, N.R.F., 1938, II, p. 338 (all citations from Baudelaire will be from this edition).

¹⁰ Léger, *op. cit.*, p. 20. The painting is shown on a circus booth behind the strong man and the flutist. The legend reads: "Qui est-ce qui demandait donc à quoi pouvait servir la peinture de M. Courbet?" In his *Journal*, on April 15, 1855, Delacroix criticizes the *Wrestlers* as "lacking in action." It is interesting that it was painted over a romantic picture of a Walpurgis Night that Courbet had exhibited in the *Salon* of 1848.

¹¹ From an article in *Messageur de l'Assemblée*, 1851, reprinted in Champfleury's *Grandes Figures d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, Paris 1861, p. 244. At the same time "naïveté" was also discovered in David. See Delécluse, *David, son école et son temps*, Paris, 1855, p. 176, who speaks of the *Tennis Court Oath*, the *Lepelletier*, the *Marat* and the *Dead Barrat*, as a return to naïveté. See also for the same view, Jules Renouvier, *Histoire de l'art pendant la Révolution*, Paris, 1863, p. 77.

¹² For an example of a contemporary print of the rue Git-le-Cœur, see Duchastre and Saulnier, *L'imagerie populaire*, Paris 1925, p. 108—"L'horrible assassinat... par un mari jaloux" (Pl. 38b).

¹³ See p. 64 and note 9 above.

¹⁴ See his *Journal*, April 15, 1855, and August 3, 1855.

¹⁵ "Ils n'ont pas le charme voilé des œuvres poétiques de Corot; mais ils ont la qualité suprême de l'horreur de la composition." Champfleury, *Souvenirs et Portraits de jeunesse*, Paris 1872, p. 173, quoted from his review of Courbet's work at the *Salon* of 1847. Champfleury attributes the same quality to the Le Nans in his monograph of 1862.

¹⁶ See Th. Durt, *Courbet*, Paris 1918, Pl. XXXII.

¹⁷ The same idea in Victor Fournel, *Ce qu'on voit dans les rues de Paris*, Paris, 1856, pp. 384 ff., and especially p. 390 on the petit-bourgeois fear of shadows as spots on the face (*Le portraituremanie, considérations sur le Daguerreotype*).

¹⁸ In charcoal on bluish paper. It is reproduced and described by Léger, *Gustave Courbet*, Paris 1929, p. 47, and Riat, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹⁹ I reproduce it after the example in the Bibliothèque Ste.-Genève in Paris. It is described by Duchastre and Saulnier, *op. cit.*, p. 141, who say it is a unique example of a very special genre. On the importance of Montbeliard in the production of images in the early nineteenth century, see the same book, pp. 135 ff.

²⁰ On this theme, *ibid.*, p. 11, 70, 103; it was introduced in woodcuts between 1800 and 1814. For the older tradition, see R. van Marle, *L'iconographie de l'art profane*, II, *Allegories et Symboles*, 1932, pp. 156 ff., and A. Engelert, *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, XV, XVI.

²¹ My illustration is taken from an article by Dr. Hoppen, "The Decades of Human Life," in *Clinical Excerptis*, New York, X, 1936, no. 7, p. 5.

²² It was printed by Vion, 27 Rue St. Jacques, Paris. The Rue St. Jacques had been since the seventeenth century one of the chief centers of production of popular imagery in France; the copper engravings of the Rue St. Jacques were the source of

many of the popular wood-cuts, and a special class of "imagerie de la rue St. Jacques" is distinguished by Ducharte and Saulnier (*op. cit.*, pp. 29, 33, 57 ff.). In the second third of the nineteenth century, it was the center of a "semi-popular" lithographic imagery.

²³ On this combination of image and "complainte," see Ducharte and Saulnier, *op. cit.*, p. 58, and illustrations, *passim*.

²⁴ *Les Excentriques*, Paris 1856.

²⁵ The lithograph was made after a painting by Courbet which belonged to Jean-Paul Mazaroz, a compatriot from Lons-le-Saulnier in the Juras. It is interesting that Mazaroz, a collector and friend of Courbet, known especially for his *meubles d'art* and his radical ideas, was the son of a bookbinder who made popular images at Lons-le-Saulnier, early in the nineteenth century. On the father, see Ducharte and Saulnier, *op. cit.*, pp. 142, 143.

²⁶ *La Mort de Jeannot—Les frais du culte, avec quatre dessins de Gustave Courbet, Exposition de Gand de 1868*, Bruxelles 1868.

²⁷ *Les Curés en Coguette avec six dessins de Gustave Courbet. Exposition de Gand de 1868*, Bruxelles 1868. The *Return from the Conference* is reproduced as the frontispiece.

²⁸ Etienne Baudry, *Le Camp des Bourgeois*, Paris 1868. For a description of the book and the history of Courbet's collaboration, see Théodore Duret, *Gustave Courbet*, Paris 1918, pp. 140, 141.

²⁹ *Les chansons populaires des provinces de France*, notice par Champfleury, accompagnées de piano par J.-B. Weckerlin, Paris 1860. Courbet also illustrated Alfred Delvaux, *Histoires anecdotiques des cafés et cabarets de Paris*, Paris 1862. The three last books were all published by Dentu, who brought out in the eighteen-sixties a large series of works on popular themes, including Champfleury's histories of caricature and popular imagery. The illustrations of Courbet have been catalogued by Duret, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-141.

³⁰ For an example see Ducharte and Saulnier, *op. cit.*, p. 68, a print from the region of Lille. *The Semeur* is almost identical with Millet's conception.

³¹ By Bonhomme in the *Salons* of 1838, 1840. Chassériau had already represented the *Le Circus* mill in 1836. See L. Rosenthal, *Du romantisme au réalisme*, Paris 1914, p. 359, and Bénédict, *Chassériau*, 1931, p. 41.

³² Cf. for example *Le Rémouleur* by Decamps in the Louvre. In the forties, during the beginnings of realism in painting, work subjects are very common. The Leloux brothers especially represent the road workers and woodcutters (Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 353, 384). Perhaps significant for the tendentiousness of such realist choice of themes is the frequency of the poacher (*Le Braconnier*) and the smuggler (*Le Contrebandier*) in the painting of the forties; the poacher is an anti-authoritarian figure. Cf. the anecdote told by Jules Janin in *L'Été à Paris*, 1843, p. 29: a poacher stopped by a guard in the royal forests replies, "Le roi, c'est le peuple; or, je suis du peuple, donc je suis le roi."

³³ The leading theoretician of the "droit au travail." Victor Considérant, author of *le Courbet du droit au travail et théorie du droit de propriété*, 1839, was a compatriot of Courbet, having been born in Salins.

³⁴ Emile de la Bédollière, *Les industriels métiers et professions en France*, avec cent dessins par Henri Monnier, Paris, 1842.

³⁵ *The Rémouleur* on p. 206 recalls the painting of Decamps and Courbet.

³⁶ "Cet ouvrage a pour objet de peindre les moeurs populaires, de mettre la classe aisee en rapport avec la classe pauvre, d'initier le public a l'existence d'artisans trop méprisés et trop inconnus."

³⁷ The destroyed original is reproduced by C. Lemonnier, *Courbet et son oeuvre*, Paris 1876, and by Léger, *Gustave Courbet*, Paris 1929, p. 97.

³⁸ Cf. P. Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, IV, 1907, p. 231—"The 'good curé' seems unknown in French pareniolog. Both in the general collections of proverbs and in those of which the materials come from the regions most renowned for their religiosity, I have searched in vain for proverbs praising the churchmen, whereas those which criticize them are found by the dozens. A special questionnaire confirms this conclusion, none of my correspondents could remember a single proverb which wasn't satirical. Although the same holds for the nobility (which was never popular), it is less surprising than in the case of the secular clergy; the country priests who are loved by their parishioners and who merit it, are not rare."

³⁹ On Chenavard, see T. Gautier, *L'art moderne*, Paris 1856, and Silvestre, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-145.

⁴⁰ P. J. Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination sociale*, Paris 1875, chaps. XVII, XVIII, and p. 280.

⁴¹ Cf. the letter to Bruyas, 1854, reporting his conversation with the Director of Fine Arts, to whom he said that "moi seul, de tous les artistes français mes contemporains, avais la puissance de rendre et ma personnalité et ma Société—P. Borel, *Le roman de Gustave Courbet d'après une correspondance originale du grand peintre*, Paris 1922, pp. 68, 69.

⁴² Léger, *Courbet*, 1929, p. 57; the legend reads "grands admirateurs des tableaux de M. Courbet."

⁴³ Champfleury, *Souvenirs*, Paris 1872, p. 174.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 175; Riat, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁴⁵ Léger, "Documents inédits sur Gustave Courbet," *L'Amour de l'art* XII, 1931, p. 385 ff.

⁴⁶ He describes it in letters to Bruyas (Borel, *op. cit.*, pp. 56, 57) and Champfleury (catalogue of the exhibition, *L'Atelier du Peintre*, Galerie Barbazanges, Paris, n.d. 1919).

⁴⁷ Champfleury, *Souvenirs*, pp. 185 ff., and Audebrand, *Derniers Jours de la Bohème*, pp. 77-212; La Brasserie de la Rue des Martyrs.

⁴⁸ Léger, *Courbet selon les caricatures*, p. 37; see also Léger, *Courbet*, 1929, p. 27.

⁴⁹ Borel, *op. cit.*, Pl. p. 96.

⁵⁰ On the primitivism of the romantics, see N. H. Clement, *Romanticism in France*, New York 1939, chap. X, pp. 462-479.

⁵¹ Cf. the early version of *L'Education Sentimentale*, c. 1843-1845, where he says of his hero, Jules (apparently the young Flaubert): "En somme, il fit bon marché de tous les fragments de chants populaires, traductions de poèmes étrangers, hymnes de barbares, odes de cannibales, chansonnettes d'Esquimaux, et autres fatras inédits dont on nous assomme depuis vingt ans. Petit à petit même, il se défit de ces prédilections malsaines que nous avons malgre nous pour des oeuvres médiocres, goûts dépravés qui nous vident de bonne heure et dont l'esthétique n'a pas encore découvert la cause."

⁵² On Buchon (1819-1869) and his writings, see Emile Fourquet, *Les Hommes célèbres de Franche-Comté*, 1929; on his part in the realist movement, see the excellent work of Emile Bouvier, *La Bataille Réaliste* (1844-1857), Paris 1913, p. 183 ff.

⁵³ The lithographs are reproduced by Léger, *Courbet*, 1929, p. 25.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18 (in the museum of Vevey); there is a second portrait in the museum of Salins.

⁵⁵ Gautier, *Histoire du Romantisme, Les progrès de la poésie française depuis 1830*, Paris 1872.

⁵⁶ Max Buchon, *Recueil de dissertations sur le réalisme*, Neuchâtel, 1856; it is quoted by Léger, *Courbet*, 1929, pp. 65-67.

⁵⁷ On Dupont (1821-1870), see Bouvier, *op. cit.*, p. 165 ff. A poet of very similar interests and also close to both Dupont and Courbet was Gustave Mathieu (Bouvier, p. 173 ff.); for his portrait by Courbet, see Léger, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

⁵⁸ His portrait by Courbet is in the museum of Karlsruhe, Léger, *op. cit.*, Pl. 51.

⁵⁹ His collected poems are published in *Muse Populaire, Chants et Poésies*, of which I have used the sixth edition, Paris 1861.

⁶⁰ Bouvier, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁶¹ See his *Muse Populaire*, pp. 286 ff.

En ces calamités publiques,
Toujours les premiers à courir,
Nos pompiers, soldats pacifiques,
Savent aussi vaincre et mourir.

and the refrain:

Au feu! au feu!
L'incendie éclate,
La flamme écarlate
Rougit le ciel bleu.

Au feu!

For a reproduction of Courbet's painting in the Petit Palais, see Charles Léger, *Gustave Courbet* (Collection des Maîtres), Paris 1934, fig. 24.

⁶² Interesting also for Courbet, are the *Chant de la Mer*, *Muse Populaire*, p. 45, and *Le Cuirassier de Waterloo* (*ibid.*, p. 226, on the painting by Géricault—"Général, ta mâle peinture...").

⁶³ Cf. Courbet's statement to the Minister of Fine Arts in 1854, recorded in his letter to Bulyas: "Je répondis immédiatement que je ne comprendis absolument rien à tout ce qu'il venait de me dire, d'abord parce qu'il m'affirmait qu'il était un gouvernement et que je ne me sentais nullement compris dans ce gouvernement, que moi aussi j'étais un Gouvernement et que je défiais le sien de faire quoi que ce soit pour le mien que je puisse accepter." (Borel, *op. cit.*, pp. 67, 68.)

⁶⁴ It is the refrain of *Les Deux Compagnons du Devoir*, *Muse Populaire*, p. 233 ff.

⁶⁵ In his *Histoire du Romantisme*.

⁶⁶ See his preface to Dupont's *Chants et Chansons*, 1851, reprinted in his *L'Art romantique, Oeuvres*, II, pp. 403-413, and a second essay in 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 551-557.

⁶⁷ *Oeuvres*, II, p. 412.

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.*, pp. 248, 249.

⁶⁹ Riat, *op. cit.*, p. 55 (letter of April 17, 1848).

⁷⁰ The nom de plume of Jules Fleury (1821-1889). On his life, writings and part in the realist movement, see Bouvier, *op. cit.*; P. Martino, *Le roman réaliste sous le Second Empire*, Paris 1913; J. Troubat, *Une amitié à la d'Arthez. Champfleury, Courbet*, Max Buchon, Paris 1900 (not available to me); the same writer's edition of the letters of Champfleury, *Sainte-Beuve et Champfleury*, Paris 1908.

⁷¹ Cited by L. Rosenthal, *Du Romantisme au Réalisme*, Paris 1914, pp. 383-386.

⁷² In his *Souvenirs*, 1872, p. 185, Champfleury attributes the beginning of the movement of realism to Courbet in 1848. His dependence on Courbet, Dupont and Buchon is made clear by Bouvier, pp. 165-256, especially pp. 244, 245 on Courbet. He

already knew Buchon and Dupont by 1847, before he met Courbet; he began his studies of folk literature and art around 1848 or 1849 (see his *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, Paris 1869, 2nd ed., pp. xlv, xlv), and published an article on the legend of the *Bonhomme Misère* in 1850 (Bouvier, p. 180). His novel, *Les Bourgeois de Molinehart*, 1855, was dedicated to Buchon. Courbet also helped Champfleury in his studies of folk art. In a letter to Champfleury about his work at Orans in 1849 or early in 1850, Courbet speaks of collecting "des chansons de paysans" for Champfleury: "je vous porterais les Bons Sabots de Besançon," he adds. See *L'Amour de l'Art* XII, 1931, p. 389.

⁷³ They are stated in the prefaces to his novel and collection of short stories (*Contes Domestiques, Les Aventures de Mariette*) and in *Le Réalisme*, 1857, and have been brought together by Bouvier, pp. 311, 312.

⁷⁴ See the articles collected in *Le Réalisme*, 1857, and especially p. 3 ff.

⁷⁵ The chief works are: *Histoire de la caricature*, in 5 volumes (1865-1880); *Histoire de l'imagerie Populaire*, 1869; *Les chansons populaires des provinces de France*, 1860; *Histoire des faïences patriotiques*, 1867; *Les vignettes romantiques*, 1883; *Les Frères Le Nain*, 1862; *Henry Monnier, Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre*, 1879; *Les Chats*, 1869; *Bibliographie céramique*, 1881.

⁷⁶ The history of the taste for popular poetry and songs is sketched by Champfleury, *De la poésie populaire en France*, extr. n.d. (c. 1857), pp. 137-182. For a more recent and fuller account, see N. H. Clement, *Romanticism in France*, New York, 1939.

⁷⁷ See the bibliography of recent publications from 1844 to 1857 in Champfleury's article, p. 137.

⁷⁸ In a letter to Champfleury quoted in the same article, p. 157; other mid-nineteenth century opinions with the same content are quoted on pp. 156-159. In an article of 1853, reprinted in *Le Réalisme*, 1857, pp. 186, 187, Champfleury also speaks of French folk music in relation to exotic (Chinese and American Indian) music. He remarks on the peculiar coincidence of the originality of folk music with the most recent refinements of civilized taste: "Depuis deux ou trois ans des esprits distingués cherchent à introduire le *quart de ton* dans la musique moderne. La musique populaire est une mine d'intervalles harmoniques imprévus, sauvages ou raffinés, comme on voudra." And also on the melodies of popular songs which are "toutes en dehors des lois musicales connues; elles échappent à la notation, car elles n'ont pas de mesure; une tonalité extravagante en apparence, raisonnable cependant, puisqu'elle est d'accord avec une poésie en dehors de toutes les règles de prosodie, ferait gémir les didactiques professeurs d'harmonie."

⁷⁹ *Histoire des livres populaires, ou de la littérature du colportage depuis le XV^e siècle jusqu'à l'établissement de la Commission d'examen des livres du colportage* (30 nov. 1852), Paris 1854. Also important for the interest in popular arts is Charles Nisard's *Des Chansons populaires chez les anciens et chez les Français, essai historique suivi d'une étude sur la chanson des rues contemporaine*, Paris 1867, 2 volumes. Volume 2 had already been published in great part as *La Muse paritaire et la Muse foraine*, Paris 1863. Nisard also published a book on the language of Paris: *Étude sur la langue populaire ou patois de Paris*, 1872.

⁸⁰ Charles Magnin, *Histoire des Marionnettes en Europe*, 2nd ed. 1862.

⁸¹ Edmund Duranty, *Théâtre des Marionnettes du jardin des Tuileries, Textes et compositions des dessins par M. Duranty*, Paris n.d. (1863). It is illustrated by two kinds of colored lithographs, one in the style of the early sixties, with rococo qualities, the other reproducing the naive style of the marionettes and their settings in illustra-

tions of the marionette shows. On the judgment of children's dolls and toys, see Baudelaire's essay, *Morale du Joujou* (1853), in *Oeuvres*, II, pp. 136-142.

⁸² See the introduction to his *Oeuvres*, ed. A. Thibaudet and R. Dumesnil, Paris, N.R.F., 1936, I, pp. 42-45, and Edouard Maynial, *La jeunesse de Flaubert*, p. 137 ff.

⁸³ *Oeuvres*, N.R.F., Paris, 1937, p. 45.

⁸⁴ *The Card Players*, in the Louvre.

⁸⁵ *Nouveaux Voyages en Zigzag*, Paris 1854, p. 38 (written before 1846).

⁸⁶ *Salon de 1846*, *Oeuvres*, II, p. 90, and *Salon de 1859*, *ibid.*, II, p. 255.

⁸⁷ *Salon de 1846*, *ibid.*, II, p. 127; the same ideas in *Salon de 1859*, *ibid.*, II, p. 275.

⁸⁸ In the same *Salon*, speaking of Delacroix, he says that sculptors have rallied against Delacroix's drawing unjustly. They are partial and one-eyed people, whose judgment at the most is worth half the judgment of an architect. "La sculpture, à qui la couleur est impossible et le mouvement difficile, n'a rien à démêler avec un artiste que préoccupent surtout le mouvement, la couleur et l'atmosphère. Ces trois éléments demandent nécessairement un contour un peu indéci, des lignes légères et flottantes, et l'audace de la touche" (p. 79).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* The idea that sculpture is the first and the most primitive art is also Winckelmann's: "for a child also can give a certain form to a soft mass, but he cannot draw on a surface; for the first, the mere concept of a thing is sufficient, but for drawing much more knowledge is needed."—*Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, Erster Teil, Das erste Kapitel.

⁹⁰ Baudelaire does not have in mind here, as one might suppose from the passage quoted in note 88 above, a distinction between the plastic and the picturesque, the tactile and the optic, in the modern sense, in order to deduce the necessary inferiority of the sculpture in a period of impressionistic taste. On the contrary, he declares that sculpture, though "brutal and positive like nature, is at the same time vague and intangible, because it shows too many sides at once" (*Oeuvres*, II, pp. 127, 128); it lacks a unique point of view and is subject to accidents of illumination. What he condemns above all in sculpture is its vulgar artisan reality, that efficient industrial character which in the mid-nineteenth century gave savage handicraft some value to Victorian taste. Cf. Melville, *Moby Dick*, chap. LVII on the "ancient Hawaiian war-club or spear-paddle" which is "as great a trophy of human perseverance as a Latin lexicon"; cf. also the "beautiful New Zealand paddle," that Owen Jones admires in the first chapter of his *Grammar of Ornament* (1856). It is the skill rather than the fantasy of the savage that Baudelaire despises.

⁹¹ *Le Salon Caricatural critiqué en vers et contre tous illustré de 60 caricatures dessinées sur bois. Première année*, Paris 1846. Reprinted in facsimile in Ch. Baudelaire, *Oeuvres en Collaboration*, with introduction and notes by Jules Mouquet, Paris 1932, cf. pp. 9, 15, 17.

⁹² *Histoire de l'Imagerie populaire*, 2nd ed. 1869, p. xii. In the 1886 edition, he changes "most" (plupart) to "many" (bon nombre).

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

⁹⁴ Livre 6ème, chap. xx, xxi, pp. 249-255 of the Paris 1853 edition. That Champfleury was acquainted with Töpffer's books appears from the reference in his *Histoire de la caricature antique* (n.d.—1865?), p. 189, to Töpffer's *Essai de Physiognomonie*, Geneva 1845, a propos Töpffer's studies and reproductions of children's drawings in this book. However, Champfleury is probably mistaken in calling the ancient graffiti he reproduces opposite p. 186 a child's drawing.

⁹⁵ *Réflexions et menus propos*, pp. 254, 255.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* chap. xx.

⁹⁷ See his delightful albums, which are the true forerunners of the comic strip and the animated cartoon: *Histoire de M. Jabot*, *Le Docteur Festus*, *Histoire d'Albert*, *Histoire de M. Cryptogame*, all of which were reprinted in Paris.

⁹⁸ See Sainte-Beuve's preface to his *Nouveaux Voyages en Zigzag*, Paris 1854: *Notice sur Töpffer considéré comme paysagiste* (also in the *Causeries du Lundi*, VIII). Sainte-Beuve speaks of the "caractère à la fois naïf et réfléchi de son originalité," and cites Töpffer's maxim "Tous les paysans ont du style" and his interest in the "langage campagnard et paysannesque."

⁹⁹ See pp. 129-166, *Du beau dans l'art*.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 131.

¹⁰¹ Riat, *op. cit.*, p. 88. Gautier speaks of the "étrangeté caribbe du dessin et de la couleur."

¹⁰² His first article on the legend of the *Bonhomme Misère* was published in *L'Événement*, October 26, 1850.

¹⁰³ "Le génie n'est que l'enfance retrouvée à volonté" (*Oeuvres*, II, p. 331); and in the *Salon de 1846*: "[I] est curieux de remarquer que, guidé par ce principe—que le sublime doit fuir les détails,—l'art pour se perfectionner revient vers son enfance" (*ibid.*, II, p. 100).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, II, p. 329.

¹⁰⁵ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 331—"un de mes amis me disait un jour qu'étant fort petit, il assistait à la toilette de son père, et qu'alors il contemplait, avec une stupeur mêlée de délices, les muscles des bras, les dégradations de couleurs de la peau nuancée de rose et de jaune, et le réseau bleuâtre des veines." On the child as potential colorist, see also his remarks in *L'Oeuvre et la Vie de Delacroix*, *ibid.*, II, p. 305. But Baudelaire could hardly approve the drawings of children, since he required that drawing "doit être comme la nature, vivant et agité . . . la simplification dans le dessin est une monstruosité" (*Oeuvres*, II, p. 163), and protested against the classicist taste for stable, closed, simplified forms as a prejudice of savages and peasants (*Oeuvres*, II, p. 305). Interesting in this context is Delacroix's dislike of children (*ibid.*, p. 320); in his paintings, they are sometimes blood victims.

¹⁰⁹ Baudelaire's conception of the child as endlessly observant and curious reappears as an original scientific observation some fifteen years later in Taine's article on the Acquisition of Language by Children, in the first number of the *Revue Philosophique*, January 1876; it was translated into English in *Mind*, II, 1877, and inspired Darwin to publish his own famous article on the development of the child in the same volume of *Mind*. Taine says of the twittering of a little girl: "its flexibility is surprising. I am persuaded that all the shades of emotion, wonder, joy, wilfulness and sadness are expressed by differences of tone; in this she equals or even surpasses a grown up person." And of the wonderful curiosity of the infant: "No animal, not even the cat or dog, makes this constant study of all bodies within its reach; all day long the child of whom I speak (at twelve months) touches, feels, turns round, lets drop, tastes and experiments upon everything she gets hold of; whatever it may be, ball, doll, bead, or anything, when once it is sufficiently known she throws it aside, it is no longer new; she has nothing to learn from

it and has no further interest in it. It is pure curiosity. . . ." This article was reprinted in Taine's *De l'Intelligence*, Volume I, Note 1. In the same book, he speaks of infancy as the most creative period of the intelligence (Liv. IV, chap. 1, ii).

¹¹⁰ Delacroix could say of the *Bathers* of Courbet that "the commonness and uselessness of the thought are abominable." *Journal*, April 15, 1853.

¹¹¹ See Théodore Duret, *Les peintres français en 1867*, Paris 1867, chapter on Courbet.

¹¹² The full title in the catalogue of the exhibition of 1855 was: *L'Atelier du Peintre, allégorie réelle déterminant une phase de sept années de ma vie artistique* (Léger, Courbet, 1929, p. 62). For Courbet's ideas about the meaning of his work, see the letter to Champfleury, published in the catalogue of the exhibition of the painting at the Galerie Barbazanges in Paris in 1919, and the letter to Bruyas (Borel, *op. cit.*, pp. 56, 57).

¹¹³ "Les gens qui vivent de la vie" . . . He specifies them also as "les actionnaires, c'est-à-dire les amis, les travailleurs, les amateurs du monde de l'art" (letter to Champfleury).

¹¹⁴ He is not mentioned in the letter (nor is the child who looks at Courbet's painting). But it is surprising that Champfleury in an essay on Courbet in 1855 (published in *Le Réalisme*, 1857, pp. 279, 280) describes the little boy as playing with some prints. This incorrect observation of the realist, who prided himself on the exactness of details in his own writing, arises, I think, from his vexation with Courbet for having made his portrait in an unflattering manner. "like a Jesuit general," he wrote to Buchon (April 14, 1855—see "Lettres inédites de Champfleury," *La Revue Mondiale*, 133, 1919, p. 552); but instead of reproaching the painter for his portrait, he finds fault with the conception of the little boy at his feet: "Is M. Courbet really certain," he asks, "that a little child of a rich bourgeois would enter the studio with his parents when there is a nude woman present?"; and characteristically enough he converts the child from an artist into an amateur. The question is all the more surprising in a book in which Champfleury criticizes the prudery and hypocrisy of the French bourgeoisie in disliking the popular song, "La Femme du Roulier" (*Le Réalisme*, p. 188 ff.); here the little children of the unfaithful waggoner tell their grieving mother that they will do as their father when they grow up.

¹¹⁵ Courbet calls them "les défrayés romantiques" in the letter to Champfleury.

¹¹⁶ Between Courbet as a child and Courbet as a master, there was no Courbet "apprenti"; in the catalogue of the exhibition of 1855, he adds the following footnote to no. 1, *L'Atelier du Peintre*: "C'est par erreur que, dans le livret du Palais des Beaux-Arts, il m'est assigné un maître: déjà une fois j'ai constaté et rectifié cette erreur par la voie des journaux. . . . Je n'ai jamais eu d'autres maîtres en peinture que la nature et la tradition, que le public et le travail." (The full text of the catalogue is reproduced by Léger, Courbet, 1929, pp. 61, 62.)

¹¹⁷ A similar conception appears in *Moby Dick* (1851), where Melville compares the workmanship of a savage and a sailor in bone-carving: "full of barbaric spirit and suggestiveness, as the prints of that old Dutch savage, Albert Dürer" (chap. LVII).

¹¹⁸ Troubat, *Sainte-Beuve et Champfleury*, p. 92.

¹¹⁹ Champfleury, *Le Réalisme*, p. 194 ff.

¹²⁰ *De la poésie populaire en France*, p. 141, quoted from M. de la Villemarqué and the Grimm brothers.

¹²¹ On his ideas on sincerity in art, see *Le Réalisme*, 1857, pp. 3 ff.

¹²² *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, 1869, pp. 286-301 (*L'imagerie de l'avenir*),

especially, p. 290 on the murals. He had already proposed such murals in his *Grandes Figures d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, 1861. This was a typical St. Simonian and Fourierist idea, and was discussed in 1845 at the meetings of the socialist group of the *Démocratie Pacifique*, led by Courbet's countryman, Victor Considérant. According to Esignard (G. Courbet, 1897, pp. 104, 105), Courbet spoke to Sainte-Beuve, with whom he spent much time in 1862, of his desire to decorate the railroad stations with such murals. This was also an ambition of Manet's. The importance of former St. Simonians in the development of the French railroads during the Second Empire may have contributed to the interest in such projects.

¹²³ Silvestre, *Histoire des artistes vivants*, 1856, p. 277.

¹²⁴ Courbet said in 1861: "Le réalisme est par essence l'art démocratique" (Esignard, Courbet, pp. 117, 118).

¹²⁵ This is ridiculed by Bertall in his caricature of the *Enterrement* (Léger, Courbet selon les caricatures, p. 15).

¹²⁶ The political and social history of France from 1848 to 1851 has been brilliantly written by Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France* (1848-1850), and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

¹²⁷ Bouvier, *op. cit.*, pp. 30 ff.

¹²⁸ It has been republished in facsimile with a preface by Fernand Vandérem (*Le Salut Public*, no. 1-2, Paris 1848), Paris n.d. (1925?). Wallon, *Le Presse de 1848, ou revue critique des journaux*, Paris, 1849, p. 6, calls it a "journal de fantaisie démocratique."

¹²⁹ See his *Souvenirs*, p. 298.

¹³⁰ It had only three numbers, June 4, 11, 18. On its contents, see Wallon, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-72, and p. 125.

¹³¹ Wallon describes it as "moderate reactionary," with "hatred of anarchy, tender and profound love of the people."

¹³² See Troubat, *Sainte-Beuve et Champfleury*, p. 77.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 90. He also supported the republic, he said, because of its friendly attitude to writers and artists. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 101, letter to mother, December 1849; see also Bouvier, *op. cit.*, p. 277 ff. on this novel, the first of his realistic works, and very much influenced by Dupont and Buchon.

¹³⁵ Troubat, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, letter of December 14, 1851, p. 131, and December 31, p. 133. But he did not wholly disapprove of the censorship: "je n'aime le journalisme, je ne l'ai jamais aimé et tout ce qui pourra comprimer son bavardage, je l'approuve" (p. 131), he wrote before the censorship was actually applied to his own works. He also said: "je crois, malgré n'importe quels événements, que la littérature doit vivre, qu'il y ait un Empire ou un Comité de Salut Public. Je ne crains rien, ne m'occupant pas de politique" (p. 131).

¹³⁷ "Ce fut alors que, par un brusque sobresaut, je me plongeai dans l'étudition pour échapper aux dangers de mon imagination qui avait failli suspendre deux importants journaux (*la Presse et l'Opinion nationale*)"—this statement by Champfleury in a notice on Buchon in 1877 is quoted by Troubat in *La Revue*, Paris, vol. 105, 1913, p. 35.

¹³⁸ See his brochure, *De la littérature populaire en France*, *Recherches sur les origines et les variations de la légende du bonhomme nu*, Paris 1861; and the conclusion of the later version of the same study in the *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, 1869, pp. 177-180.

¹³⁹ Bouvier, *op. cit.*, p. 180. He planned to begin with Hebel, whose work he knew through the translations of his radical friend, Buchon.

¹⁴⁰ See *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, 1869, 2nd ed., pp. xlv, xlvii. He had already published an article on the "bonhomme misère" in *L'Événement* in October 1850.

¹⁴¹ Henry Monnier, *Grandeur et décadence de Monsieur Joseph Prudhomme*, in *Moreaux Choisis*, Paris 1935, p. 211; the comedy was first played in 1852.

¹⁴² He writes in 1849 of the "socialisme des paysans,—socialisme inévitable, féroce, stupide, bestial, comme un socialisme de la torche ou de la faux" (*Lettres* 1841–1866, Paris 1906, p. 16); and after the coup-d'état: "*Le 2 Décembre m'a physiquement dépoliti. Il n'y a plus d'idées générales. . . . Si j'avais voté, je n'aurais pu voter que pour moi. Peut-être l'avenir appartient-il aux hommes déclassés?*" (*ibid.*, p. 31). In 1848, Baudelaire had been somewhat more constant than Champfleury. See Wallon, *op. cit.*, pp. 109, 114, on his contributions to radical journals and Wallon's admonitions on politics and poetry, addressed to Baudelaire.

¹⁴³ See his essay on progress in *Exposition Universelle de 1855, Oeuvres*, II, pp. 148 ff.—"Il est encore une erreur fort à la mode, de laquelle je veux me garder comme de l'enfer.—Je veux parler de l'idée du progrès . . ."

¹⁴⁴ See his studies of the *Bonhomme Misère*, cited above in note 138. "Alas, neither pistol shots nor bloodshed will abolish misery. The sweet plaint of the story-teller who shows the *bonhomme* resigned, contented with his lot, asking only to gather the fruits of his pear tree, is more persuasive than a cannon. Yes, misery will remain on the earth as long as the earth exists" (*Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, 1869, pp. 177, 178). He contrasts the immortality of works like this legend with the merely ephemeral "wars, social movements, industrial transformations" (*Histoire*, p. 180, and *De la littérature populaire en France*, 1861, conclusion). On p. 178 of the *Histoire*, he identifies the "bonhomme misère" as a "petit propriétaire," and adds: "La philosophie de nos pères est inscrite à chaque page du conte et il serait à regretter qu'elle ne restât pas la philosophie de nos jours. La situation du peuple s'est largement améliorée depuis un siècle; elle fait maintenant plus que jamais de rapides progrès. Elle ne sera réellement fructueuse qu'avec des goûts modestes et peu de besoins. C'est pourquoi le bonhomme Misère prêterait toujours à méditer, et je ne doute pas qu'un Franklin, s'il avait eu connaissance d'un tel conte, ne l'eût vulgarisé parmi ses compatriotes" (*Histoire*, p. 179). Champfleury has not forgotten altogether his editorship of *Le Bonhomme Richard* with Wallon in 1848.

¹⁴⁵ *Histoire*, pp. 268–285.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 179, 180, on the greater durability of the ideas and literature of the peasantry.

¹⁴⁷ Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823–97), *Die Naturgeschichte des Volkes als Grundlage einer deutschen Sozial-Politik*, 4 vols., 1851–1864.

¹⁴⁸ On page 140 of the *Histoire de l'imagerie populaire*, 1869, he indicates why the peasant tale and image are more effective in teaching the people than any official instruction. "The lesson flows from the story itself without being marked by the puerilities of the didactic literature with the aid of which the rulers in moments of trouble think they can appease irritated minds and which the people reject, finding the doctrine too often heavy and pedantic."

¹⁴⁹ It is reproduced by Léger, *Courbet*, 1929, p. 40.

¹⁵⁰ *Souvenirs*, p. 171.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² "Voilà deux ans que je fais la guerre de l'intelligence" (June 26, 1848), Riat, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁵³ In that year he wrote: "Je suis non seulement socialiste, mais bien encore démocrate et republicain, en un mot partisan de toute la Révolution" (Estignard, *op. cit.*, p. 123).

¹⁵⁴ It was published in 1864.

¹⁵⁵ His *Sensations de Josquin* was accepted by the *Revue* in 1855; but Buchon, with the aid of Champfleury, was already printed there in 1854. On the attitude of the *Revue* to realism, see Thaddeus E. Du Val, Jr., *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁶ The article, "Sur M. Courbet, *Lettre à Madame Sand*," is published in *Le Réalisme*, 1857, pp. 270–285.

¹⁵⁷ See his letter to Buchon, *La Revue Mondiale*, 1919, vol. 133, pp. 533, 534; also his *Souvenirs*, 1872, on conversations with Proudhon c. 1860. In spite of his insensibility to art and the vague idealism of his aesthetic theories, Proudhon was respected by Baudelaire as an independent personality and as an economist interested in the plight of the small debtor under capitalism. See Baudelaire's *Lettres*, Paris 1906, pp. 404, 409, 410, 425.

¹⁵⁸ See above, note 114.

¹⁵⁹ In the *Sensations de Josquin*, 1855, 1857. See Léger, *Courbet selon les caricatures*, 1920, p. 118.

¹⁶⁰ *Grandes Figures*, 1861, pp. 231–263; *Souvenirs*, 1872 (written 1862, 1863), pp. 171–192 and *passim*. In the latter he speaks of "1852, époque de notre séparation" (p. 192), although on pp. 245, 246, he refers to his vacation with Courbet in Ormans in 1856, and on p. 317 says that he lived a dozen years with Courbet and "his menagerie of vanities."

¹⁶¹ In letter to Buchon: *La Revue Mondiale*, 133, 1919, p. 544 (1857).

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 540, 705 ff.

¹⁶³ See Léger, *Courbet selon les caricatures*, p. 118 ff.

¹⁶⁴ In 1857 already, soon after publishing *Le Réalisme*, Champfleury thought that realism was finished—"the public is tired of novels of observation. *Madame Bovary* will be the last bourgeois novel. One must find something else" (*Souvenirs*, p. 246).

¹⁶⁵ "Je vais partir pour Ormans et faire encore quelques tableaux nouveaux bien sentis et socialistes," he wrote in 1868 to Bruyas (Borel, *op. cit.*, p. 108). On his relations with Proudhon, see Riat, *op. cit.*, p. 208 ff.

¹⁶⁶ *Souvenirs*, p. 191.

¹⁶⁷ *Grandes Figures*, pp. 236 ff. "Woe to artists who wish to teach by their works . . . or to associate themselves with the acts of some regime."

¹⁶⁸ Silvestre, *Histoire des artistes vivants*, 1856, p. 266, in a summary of Courbet's ideas on realism and historical painting.